

- ⁶ Neither slate nor granite is found on the island; the author uses “maca” for “rock”, which is probably a transcription error where *maea* would have been the appropriate word.
- ⁷ Bone needles on Easter Island are known as *ivi*.
- ⁸ The “superstition” to which the anonymous author refers probably relates to the fact that, at this time in Easter Island’s history, wood was a very rare and precious commodity.
- ⁹ Thomson (1891:536) calls this “Timoika”.
- ¹⁰ Thomson (1891:536) calls these “rapa” and states they were painted light red in color.
- ¹¹ These would be the so-called “Small Washington” and “Large Washington” tablets now housed at the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC USA.
- ¹² Clearly these are not just island houses but, judging from descriptions of their construction and of adjacent petroglyph carvings, they are the stone houses of ‘Orongo.
- ¹³ The *tangata manu* or “Birdman”.
- ¹⁴ The Sooty Tern, no doubt, and also most likely the Frigate Bird.

- ¹⁵ The *Manu Piri* — a motif said to signify the concept of family.
- ¹⁶ The “mystical” symbolism included *komari* or vulva shapes.
- ¹⁷ The “King’s Platform” is generally recognized as Ahu Akahanga, found on the south coast.
- ¹⁸ Ahu Tongariki, obviously.

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GETTING TO KNOW YOU

PAUL HORLEY

- Q.** How did you get into archaeology, and specifically Easter Island archaeology? What triggered your interest?
- A.** My interest to Easter Island started with reading Thor Heyerdahl’s *Aku-Aku* at the age of about ten; the vivid descriptions of the island, its people and their unique culture, and especially the majestic photographs taken by Erling Schjervén, had a truly captivating effect on me. Almost twenty years later, working on a research project in México (*i.e.*, only one ocean away from Easter Island!), I was lucky to have a chance to visit Rapa Nui and to stay there for ten days — a truly magnificent and unforgettable experience! After returning home, I decided to study more about the history and culture of this unique island.
- Q.** Who or what do you consider as your most significant influence (scientific or otherwise) either as a person or a particular work (or series of works)?
- A.** I am most sincerely and deeply grateful to Georgia Lee for her great help and support. Actually, even before we started to communicate, she was already guiding my exploration of Easter Island — I was visiting its great archaeological sites with Georgia’s *Uncommon Guide to Easter Island* in hand. Later, Georgia kindly answered my numerous e-mails, generously sharing her great knowledge on Rapa Nui culture, heritage, and the problems of its preservation. I am also especially thankful to Georgia for the great opportunity to do joint research work with

her dedicated to one of the most fascinating Rapa Nui sites — the Birdmen village of ‘Orongo.

- Q.** What theory or project of yours turned out to be different from what you had expected as, for example, a complete surprise?
- A.** It was very surprising to find that the accounts of early visitors to Easter Island contain much more detailed and accurate information than appears at first sight. Some of these observations may be misplaced or improperly captioned — but, in the majority of the cases, they allow one to extract a lot of useful information about numerous archaeological sites.
- Q.** What would you have done if you had not pursued your current line(s) of research and interests?
- A.** Most probably, I will be developing numerical methods for the computer image enhancement, making 3D models, or studying photogrammetry and stereoscopic photography.



Q. What was your best Eureka moment?

A. It was exciting to find that the original *rongorongo* tablets (*Tahua*, *Aruku Kurenga*, and *Mamari*, displayed at the Exhibition of 60 Objects from Easter Island, Galerie Louise Leiris, Paris, June 3 - July 31, 2008) reveal a whole set of scribal errors and corrections, which are completely natural and expectable for a true writing system.

Q. What do you hope to accomplish (in archaeology) on Easter Island in the future?

A. Speaking about *rongorongo*, there is a significant hope that despite the fact that only a limited number of inscribed artefacts is known, their total text *seems* to be large enough to allow a phonetic decipherment. It would be just wonderful if it could be possible to read the messages engraved on the surviving tablets. And, if decipherment could be achieved, it would be even more amazing to re-introduce the *rongorongo* script back to use, so that it can serve again as a writing system for the beautiful Rapanui language.

Q. What is your favorite Easter Island site and why?

A. It is difficult to name just a single place — there are so many of them! If I would be allowed to choose three, these beyond any doubt will be Rano Raraku (especially the external quarries with the famous cluster of Moai Hinariu), 'Orongo (with the highly-decorated sacred precinct of Mata Ngarau), and 'Anakena with majestic Ahu Nau Nau outlined against a honey-colored dune blending with the gentle turquoise and ultramarine waves of the boundless Pacific.

Q. What myth or misinformation about Easter Island would you like to dispel?

A. The idea that the ancient islanders were unable to create the megalithic wonders of Rapa Nui without external help. As one can see from the cultural heritage remaining from different civilizations worldwide, each precisely defined a set of tasks that could have been accomplished using available means — and so they did. Thus, numerous ceremonial platforms, gigantic statues, elaborate petroglyphs, and a unique writing system — all of these are the achievements of Easter Island people, the masters of creative imagination of a colossal-scale together with great artistic and engineering skills required to put a dream to reality.

Q. What's the most important thing you'd like visitors (or scientists, for that matter) to know about Easter Island?

A. Easter Island is the most fascinating monument to human *collaboration*. It would be impossible to complete the titanic undertakings of the ancient Rapanui without the proper organization of so many different people — artists, carvers, architects, transport engineers, road builders, food providers, messengers synchronizing the activities of different working groups, and so on. The collapse of this civilization due to tribal warfare (triggered by overpopulation, ecological problems, etc.) illustrates the extreme fragility of such collaborative bonds within a society. In my opinion, the main lesson of Easter Island is that it is a *true miracle* when the people combined their efforts to solve their problems, and when they do so, even the most monumental and unbelievable projects eventually become successfully completed.

Q. What advice would you give to a person interested in Easter Island archaeology or anthropology (or these fields generally)?

A. Archaeology is an amazing science. It reveals strong links between various historical periods, highlighting the *continuity* of the great voyage Humanity has taken from the past to the future. Easter Island archaeology is especially interesting due to its vast research horizons and numerous problems that required a solution. The multifaceted nature of the Rapa Nui cultural heritage offers a large choice of topics to work on; the modern advances in technology and data processing allows one to address these problems in completely unexpected (and promising!) ways. Visiting the island is also immensely helpful, offering a wonderful experience to communicate with nice and friendly Rapanui people, as well as to behold the great monuments and the breathtaking landscapes of the Island.

Q. What are you currently reading?

A. *Easter Island Studies: Contributions to the History of Rapanui in Memory of William T. Mulloy* edited by Steven Roger Fischer and *Reading the Maya Glyphs* by Michael Coe and Mark Van Stone.

Q. Credentials?

A. PhD (Yuri Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University, Ukraine, 1999). Between 1999 and 2005 I was an Associate Researcher at Chernivtsi National University. I became an Associate Professor there in 2005.

Q. Date and place of birth?

A. March 18, 1975, Chernivtsi, Ukraine.

Photo of Paul Horley by Konstantin Pozdnyakov, 2008.